

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 JUNE 2020

RESPONSE OF HEALTH SERVICES TO COVID-19

Summary

1. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) is to be briefed on the response of health services to COVID-19 including how services have been affected and how they are being restored. The update will also include early thoughts about how working practices are envisaged to change as a result of learning from new ways of working.
2. Representatives have been invited from Herefordshire and Worcestershire NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, Worcestershire Health and Care Trust and the County Council (Public Health and Adult Social Care).
3. It is envisaged that this update will act as a gateway to further scrutiny monitoring as health services continue to recover. The session will also build on the HOSC's on-going scrutiny to review performance of acute hospital services in Worcestershire and the impact on, and roles of, commissioners and health and care providers.
4. Further detail will be provided at the meeting through a presentation (appendix 1).

Health service response to COVID-19 pandemic

5. In just a few weeks the NHS changed the way that local hospitals and GP practices run to ensure that it was able to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Integration and system working have also moved on significantly. Some examples include:
 - Changing the way that General Practice operates across Worcestershire with a focus on remote triage and digital consultation where appropriate
 - Significant moves across other services to telephone, video and online solutions
 - Postponing non-urgent operations in secondary care and discharging all those patients who are medically fit to leave
 - Temporarily closing Evesham Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) and Tenbury MIU and closing Kidderminster MIU overnight
 - Implementing visiting restrictions in acute, community and mental health settings
 - Changing how some community and mental health hospital beds are used and flexing the use of beds in line with infection, prevention and control measures
 - Rolling out testing for staff and GPs, including care home staff and residents across Worcestershire

6. Nationally, the number of COVID-19 positive patients being admitted to hospital continues to fall and confirmed cases in Worcestershire continue to match the national trend. A&E and ambulance activity is also showing a rising trend back to more normal levels.
7. Focus now is on the 'restoration phase' which involves looking at which key services across Worcestershire can be safely be restarted with patient and staff safety remaining the priority, while also being prepared for a potential 'second wave' of cases in Autumn and Winter.
8. An evaluation framework is in place to ensure lessons learned during the COVID-19 response are effectively captured and can be used to inform future service planning and transformation as part of the NHS recovery phase.
9. Proposals to make any temporary service changes into permanent changes would be subject to appropriate engagement and consultation to ensure patients and stakeholders have the opportunity to be involved before any decisions are made.

Purpose of the Meeting

10. Members are invited to consider and comment on the information discussed and agree:

- whether any further information is required
- whether any further scrutiny work is required at this stage

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 - Presentation (to follow)

Contact Points

Emma James / Jo Weston, Overview and Scrutiny Officers, Tel: 01905 844964 / 844965
Email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager (Interim Monitoring Officer) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agenda and minutes from the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 March 2020 [Agenda for 2 March 2020 Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#)
- Agendas and minutes from COVID-19 Response Report to Cabinet on 4 June 2020 [Agenda for Cabinet on 4 June 2020](#)